

JatakaStories

True Tales of the Buddha's Past Lives

Beginner

J168 Sakunagghi Jātaka



# THE QUAIL AND THE FALCON



## About Jātaka Stories



**C**hronicles in the Sutta Piṭaka of the Tipiṭaka (the Pāli Canon), the Jātakas are a collection of 547 true stories about the Buddha's past lives. In previous births, the Buddha was known as the Bodhisatta (Buddha-to-be). The Bodhisatta's great compassion and deep wisdom is displayed throughout these inspirational stories. These are also incredible stories of growth and development as the Bodhisatta cultivated the Ten Pāramīs (Great Qualities & Perfections) in tremendous ways. Life after life He selflessly gave all things including His life, limbs and all belongings to accumulate the requisites for Buddhahood.

In these Jātakas stories, many characters that are associated with the Bodhisatta also appeared during the Buddha's time. After countless eons of growing and cultivating the Ten Pāramīs, the Bodhisatta took his final rebirth in Lumbini, Nepal in 563 BCE as Prince Siddhattha. Later at the age of thirty-five, He became the Buddha, the fully Self-Enlightened One.

The Buddha taught the Four Noble Truths and Noble Eightfold Path to the humans and devas. His boundless love and wisdom helped so many on the spiritual path to inner peace and happiness. Many of his disciples would also develop psychic powers, deep wisdom and attain Nibbāna (enlightenment, end of all suffering and rebirth, the highest everlasting happiness).

Each Jātaka story includes 3 parts:

1. The story of the present (during the Buddha's time)
2. The story of the past (during the Buddha's previous rebirths as the Bodhisatta)
3. The "birth identification" (when the Buddha connects the people in the past life story to the people in the present life)

With these inspirational stories, the Buddha shows how to apply great wholesome powers in daily life and the path to Nibbāna (ultimate happiness). All of us have hope to change and improve. With the Buddha's gradual training, each person can begin at one's own level and continue to improve in spiritual healing, growth and happiness. Enjoy!

**Buddhasāsanam Ciraṃ Tiṭṭhatu**

May the Buddha's dispensation be long lasting!



## DEDICATION

To all children around the world

*May these stories inspire great compassion, wisdom,  
and hope for the present and future generations.*

*May these stories give Dhamma strength for the welfare  
and happiness of all children.*

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

To the Saṅgha Venerables, Sayalays, lay devotees, and volunteers who  
have helped with retelling, proofreading, consulting, illustrating, typesetting  
and designing these Picture Books.

*May all wholesome wishes of all beings be fulfilled!*

## PUBLISHING INFORMATION

The teachings of the Buddha are priceless!

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However, misrepresentation of the contents must be avoided. The derivative copies  
must be in accordance with the Tipiṭaka (the Pāli Canon). In the publishing process,  
we strove to retain the originality, essence and moral lessons as told by the Buddha  
recorded in the Tipiṭaka and Commentaries.

The picture book series are mainly based on the Pāli Tipiṭaka and Commentaries of  
the 6th Buddhist Council (Chaṭṭhasaṅghītipiṭakam, Burma 1952), and were  
marginally crosschecked against Pāli texts & dictionary, and Pāli experts. Unless  
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Due to the publisher's lack of talent, shallow knowledge and a lower than beginners  
level of understanding of the Pāli language, if you were to find mistakes in this book,  
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Jātaka 168: Sakunagghi Jātaka

# THE QUAIL AND THE FALCON

How a little quail got caught by a falcon and later beat  
the falcon down by fighting on his own ground.



*Illustrated by Joanne Lee  
Designed by Joanne Lee  
Retold by Joanne Lee  
Proofread by Chan Zhi Hong*

The Buddha, while living at Jetavana, gathered the bhikkhus.

And, the Buddha began his advice to the bhikkhus to stay within their own territories while going for alms rounds.

Bhikkhus, in the past, even animals faced disaster when they left their own territory to search for food in other's territory.

Then the Buddha told this story from the past.



Long, long ago, the Bodhisatta was born as a quail. The quail lived on a farm with many holes on the ground. He would sneak into the holes to look for food, after the farmers had planted seeds in them.



One day, he thought to leave his feeding ground and try another place.





Perhaps I should leave my home and go to the forest instead.

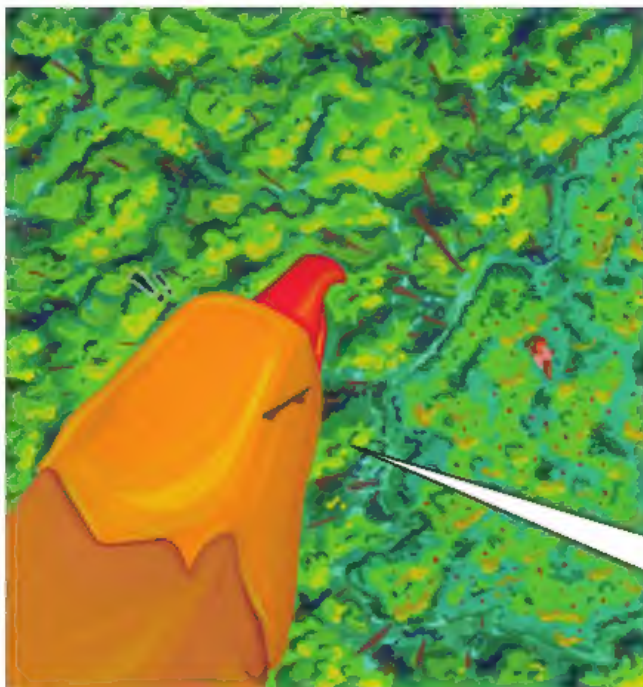
He flew to the edge of the forest.



As he arrived at the forest, he was very happy to find a lot of food.







High up in the sky, a falcon was searching for prey.

Then he saw the little quail.

A-ha! I see you, little quail.  
You shall be my meal for today!



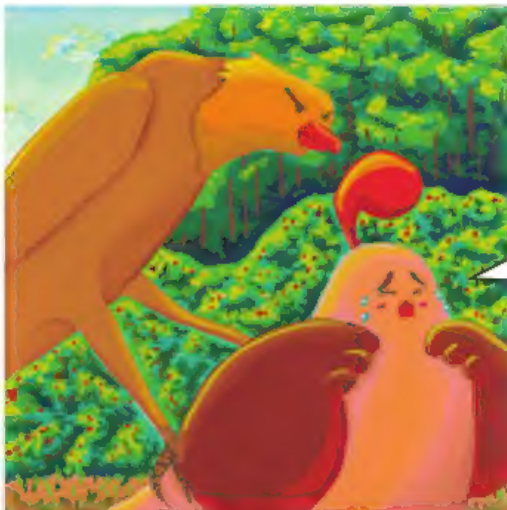
Aiming at the quail,  
the falcon swooped down,  
quickly but silently.

He came closer,  
and closer...





Oh no!  
The falcon  
caught the quail  
in his claws!



Shocked and upset, the quail cried:

Oh no! I'm so unlucky! I went into  
someone else's home to search for  
food. Oh! If only I had stayed at  
my home, where my family is, then  
Mr. Falcon wouldn't have caught me.  
I could have defeated him there.

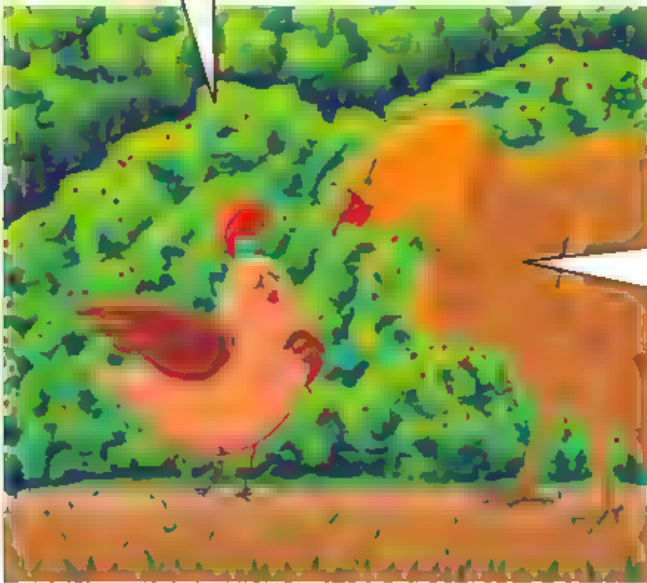
The falcon looked at the quail suspiciously.

Why little bird? where is your home?  
What makes you think that I would  
be defeated there?

It is a big field covered  
with many holes!



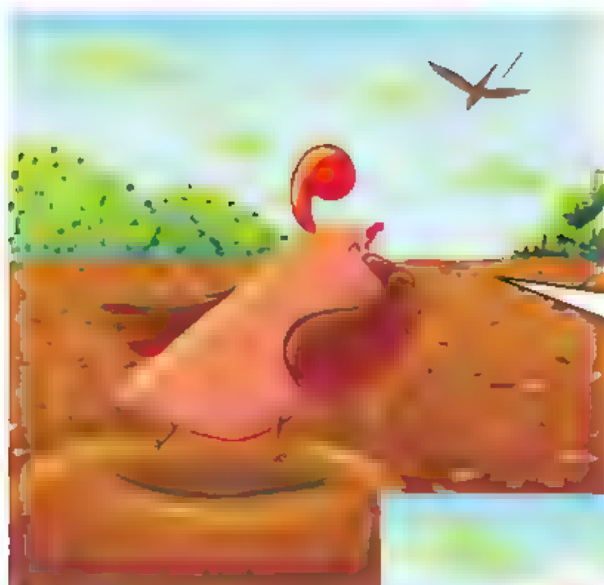
I think I could defeat you there  
too. Very well quail. Bring me to  
your home, and we shall see who  
is right!



The falcon let go of the quail.  
The quail flew back to the  
field, with the falcon following  
behind him.



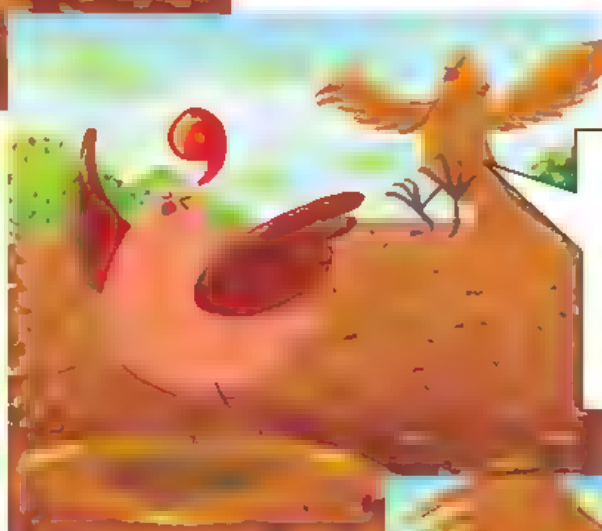




Back at the field, the quail stood on the edge of a hole and shouted to the falcon.

Now catch me if you can, Mr. Falcon!

The falcon flew down very fast, aiming straight at the quail.



You will never escape me, no matter where you are!

When the quail saw the falcon coming in full sloop, he quickly jumped and hid in the hole!





The falcon realised his mistake, but it was too late. He was flying too fast and could not stop.

Splat! The falcon hit the ground hard and died.

The little quail came out of the hole after knowing that he was safe.





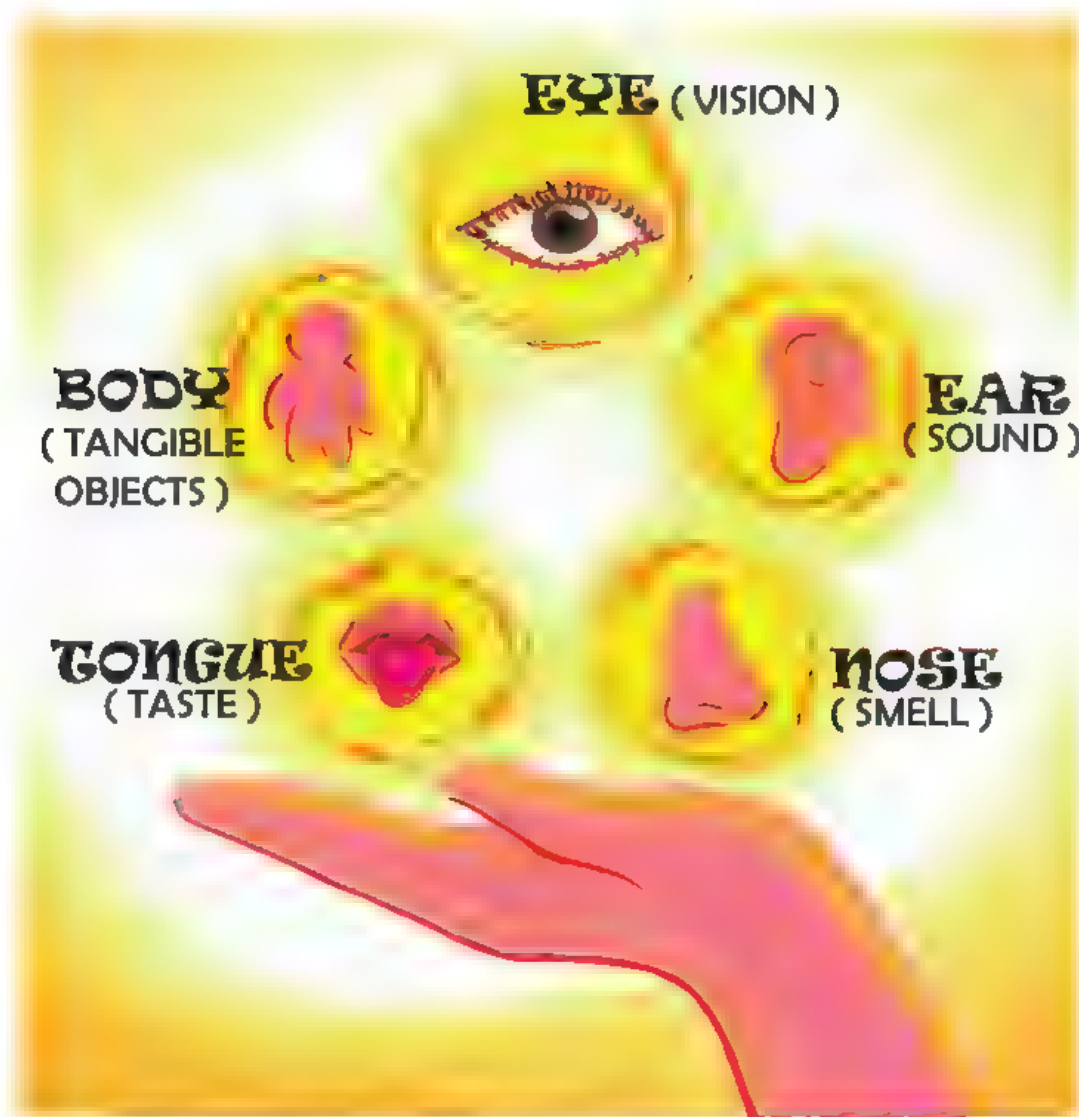
The quail stood on top of his enemy and said:

I have beaten my enemy in my own territory! I have learned my lesson. From now on, I will stay in my own home and search for food here, where it is safest.

After this story had been told, the Buddha added:

So you see, bhikkhus,  
even animals fall into their enemies'  
hands by leaving their proper ground.  
But when they stay inside the proper area,  
they conquer their enemies. Therefore, take  
care not to leave your own place and not to  
intrude into someone else's territory. When  
people leave their own place, Māra will  
find a way in to take that  
place.



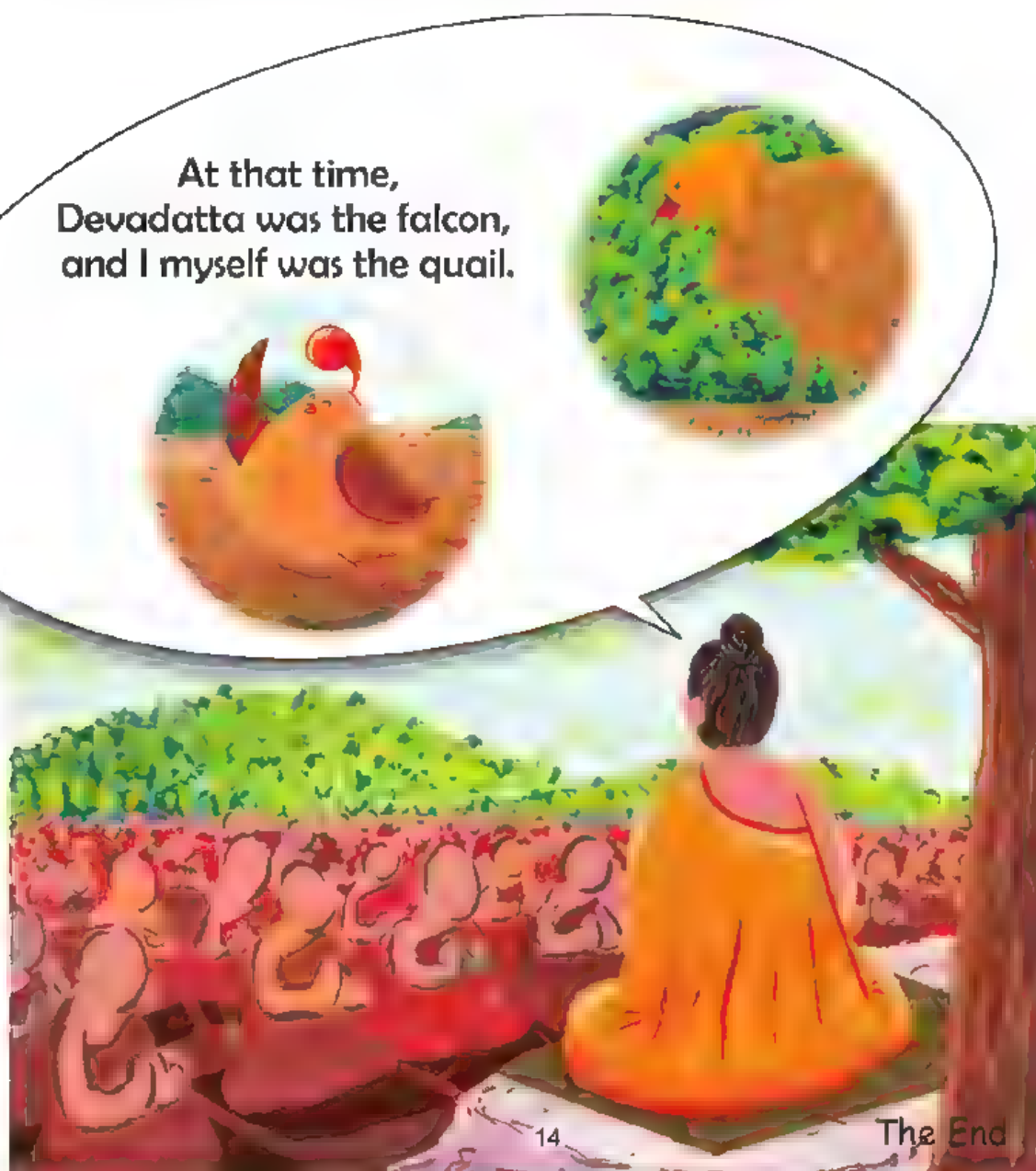


And what are the wrong places for a bhikkhu? The Tathagata is referring to the five sensual pleasures. What are these five? They are the desires of the visible, sound, smell, taste and tangible objects. These are the wrong places for bhikkhus.

At the end of the Dhamma talk, the Buddha explained the Four Noble Truths, and many of the bhikkhus attained the Stages of Liberation (Nibbāna).

The Buddha showed the connection between the previous birth and the present as follows,

At that time,  
Devadatta was the falcon,  
and I myself was the quail.



## Glossary

**Arahat:** an Arahat is a worthy one, whose mind is free from all defilements [greed (lobha), hatred (dosa), delusion (moha)], who is free from the bonds of desire, thus not destined for any further rebirth, after that very life

**Bhikkhu:** a Buddhist monk; who ordains and lives according to Dhamma (Sutta, Abhidhamma) and Vinaya.

**Bodhisatta:** is the Buddha-to-be, prophesized by another Buddha.

**Devadatta:** one of the Buddha's cousins. He became a bhikkhu along with the other Sakyan princes. He competed with the Buddha, and tried to kill Him several times. He also created a schism in the Sangha. Finally, he was swallowed by the earth and fell into hell. The origin of the implacable enmity which Devadatta felt toward the Bodhisatta is related in Jātaka 3. The Buddha prophesized (predicted) that, in the distant future, Devadatta will become a Pacceka Buddha.

**Four Noble Truths:** The Noble Truth of suffering, the Noble Truth of the origin of suffering, the Noble Truth of the cessation of suffering, and the Noble Truth of the way leading to the cessation of suffering.

**Māra:** Pāli literature often mentions of a 'fivefold Māra' (pañca-māra):

1. Māra as a deity (devaputta māra): A deity of the highest heaven of sensuous sphere
2. The Māra of defilements (kilesa-māra).
3. The Mara of the aggregates (khandha-māra). All beings of aggregates are subject to death.



4. The Māra of the kamma-formations (abhsankhāra-māra).  
Kamma leads to rebirth.
5. Māra as death (maccu-māra).

**Stages of Liberation (Nibbāna):** The Noble Truth of the cessation of suffering (nirodha-sacca). There are four stages of the realization of Nibbāna: streamenterer (sotāpanna), once-returner (sakadāgāmi), non-returner (anāgāmi) and arahat. One who attains nibbāna eliminates defilements stage by stage and eventually escapes from the round of rebirths (the whole mass of suffering of rebirth, decay, disease, death etc).

**Tathāgata:** One who has gone so; the Enlighten One.

# Teacher's Guide

## **Some questions to guide the students for reflection:**

1. What is your opinion after listening to this story? (share your feeling or opinion)
2. What have you learnt from this story?
3. What is the moral of the story? (guarding against the five sensual pleasures).
4. Which part of the story do you like/ dislike? Why?
5. In your opinion, which are the places/things/practices you would consider as dangerous territories? (refer to lesson)
6. What do you think are the suitable emotions to avoid the presents of Māra? (refer to lesson)

## **Lesson:**

### **Avoiding the Fourteen Evil Ways**

It is by abandoning the four defilements of action, by not doing evil from the four causes, by not practising the six causes of wealth loss – through avoiding these fourteen evil ways, that the Aryan disciple covers the six directions\*, and by such practice he becomes a conqueror of both worlds, so that all will go well with him in this life and the next, and at the breaking-up of the body after death he will go to a good destiny, a deva realm.

#### **(A) What are the four defilements of action that should be abandoned?**

1. Killing
2. Taking what is not given (stealing)
3. Sexual misconduct
4. Lying

#### **(B) What are the four causes of evil that should be refrained?**

1. Evil action springs from desire (greed)
2. Evil action springs from hatred
3. Evil action springs from delusion
4. Evil action springs from fear

**(C) What are the six causes of the loss of properties that should not be practised?**

1. Addiction to strong drink or sloth-producing drugs, which is a foundation for carelessness
  2. Haunting the streets at unfitting times
  3. Visiting festival and theatrical performances
  4. Addiction to gambling, which is a foundation of carelessness
  5. Keeping bad company
  6. Habitual laziness
1. There are these six dangers attached to addiction to strong drink and sloth-producing drugs:
- a. Present waste of property
  - b. Increased quarrelling
  - c. Liability to sickness
  - d. Recognised with bad name
  - e. Exposure of the shameful part
  - f. Weakening of the intellect
2. There are these six dangers attached to haunting the streets at unfitting times:
- a. One is defenceless and without protection
  - b. One's wife and children are defenceless and without protection
  - c. One's property is defenceless and without protection
  - d. One is suspected of crimes
  - e. False reports are pinned on one
  - f. One encounters all sorts of sufferings
3. There are these six dangers attached to frequenting the festival and theatrical performances:
- [One is always thinking:]
- a. Where is there dancing?
  - b. Where is there singing?



- c. Where are they playing music?
  - d. Where is there story telling?
  - e. Where are the handbells?
  - f. Where are the drums?
4. There are these six dangers attached to gambling:
- a. The winner makes enemies
  - b. The loser bewails his loss of property
  - c. Present waste of property
  - d. His word is not trusted in the court assembly
  - e. His friends and colleagues despise him
  - f. One is not in demand for marriage (a gambler is a man who cannot afford to maintain a wife)
5. There are these six dangers attached to keeping bad friends:  
Those gamblers, drunkard, glutton, cheat, deceiver, bully is his friends, his companions.
6. There are these six dangers for laziness:  
[Thinking ]
- a. "It's too cold," one does not work
  - b. "It's too hot," one does not work
  - c. "It's too late," one does not work
  - d. "It's too early," one does not work
  - e. "I'm too hungry," one does not work
  - f. "I'm too full," one does not work
- He has many reasons for his duty, his unrisen wealth cannot be risen and his risen wealth exhausted.

**- Adapted from DN31, Siṅgāla Sutta**

*\* Mother and father are the east teachers are the southward point, wife and children are the west, friends and colleagues are the north, servants and workers are below, ascetics and brahmins are above. All these social roles should be honoured by one from a good family.*

## Illustrator's Notes and Story of Rescuing a Bird

Firstly, I would like to thank Sayalay for allowing me this precious opportunity to contribute to this project. I am grateful to be a part of this project, to be able to rejoice in Lord Buddha's teachings, and to help others experience Buddha's Jataka stories in an enjoyable and educational way.

I would like to share my fateful encounter with a little bird. It was a very timely event when my grandfather came across this tiny Myna chick in his garden. At that time, I was almost finished with the illustrations of this book, which coincidentally talks about the past life when Buddha Himself was a little bird! My grandfather found it alone and couldn't find its parents nor its nest. I decided to care for it, then to release it once it grows healthy enough to fly and fend for itself.

I did some research on how to take care of a baby bird and did my best. The experience taught me to be responsible and to be kind to all beings. I made sure to guard my heart, to not let it grow attached to the bird since my plan was to release it back to nature, and because all in this realm is impermanent. Fortunately with the encouragement from my family and the supportive good kamma of the little bird, it survived!

As of the time I am writing this, a month has passed by since the day it came under my care and it has grown a lot. It is no longer the



sickly skinny bird anymore, but a mischievous and lively one. It has learnt to fly well now. However, it doesn't seem to want to leave my house. Perhaps it too realises that it is best to remain at one's own territory and knows that danger awaits if it leaves its own ground!

*The little bird on the second day after it was brought to my home.*



*It already looks different after being rescued for a week! It was very curious about my phone's camera.*



*Its flight feathers have grown completely, and it can now fly. This was taken almost one month after being rescued.*

In conclusion, the rescue of the little bird along with the chance to provide illustrations for this book have been a very memorable experience for me. A great thank you and Sādhu to the Sangha Venerables, Sayalays, lay devotees, and volunteers for producing the Jātaka Picture Books. I hope the readers can benefit from these books and enjoy reading them.

May all be happy, content, and free from sufferings.

May all have loving-kindness towards one another.

May all benefit from the teachings of the Buddha,  
and ultimately attain Nibbāna.

Sādhu, Sādhu, Sādhu!



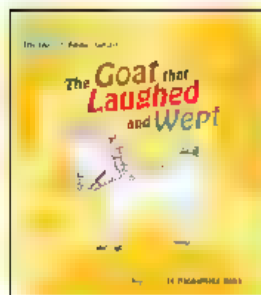
*The Jātaka Picture Books are stories retold in simple English which come in four levels of readability. The Beginner and Intermediate I levels are suitable for primary school students, while Intermediate II and Advanced levels are suitable for high school students and above.*

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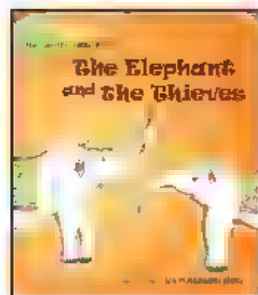
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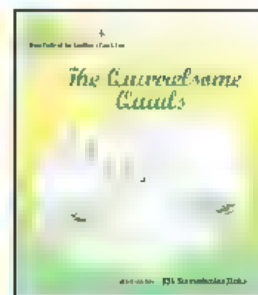
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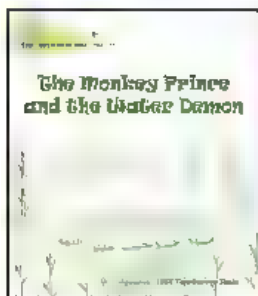
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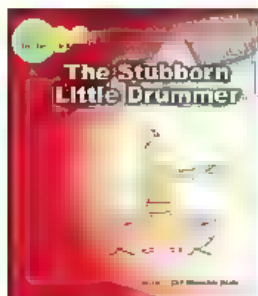
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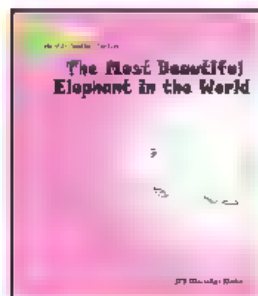
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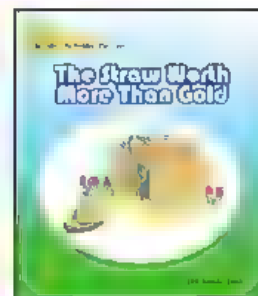
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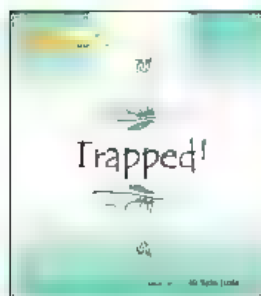
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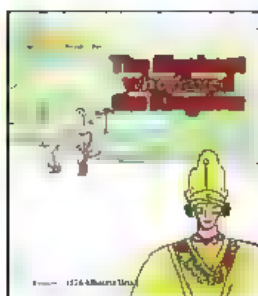
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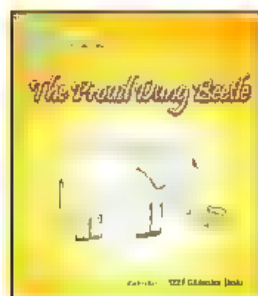
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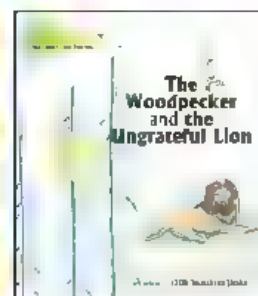
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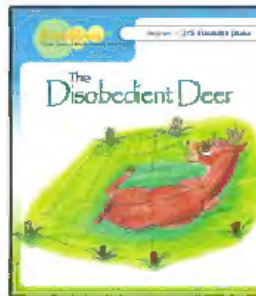
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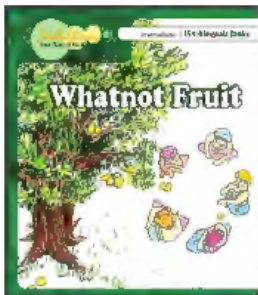
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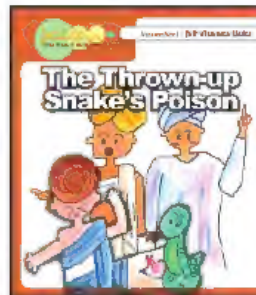
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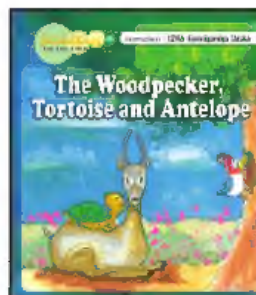
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In this story of the quail and the falcon, we see the Buddha warning us not to go into wrong places. The quail left the safety of his home and intruded into the enemy's territory. The quail could have been hurt or even died, but he managed to escape back to his home.

So what are the wrong places to go for a spiritual person? The Buddha said the wrong places to go is the world of 5 sensual pleasures, which are desires of what we see, hear, smell, taste and touch. If we get lost in this world, we will be in great danger.



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**A GIFT OF DHAMMA – NOT FOR SALE**

Sabbadānam Dhammadānam Jināti

*The gift of Dhamma excels all gifts*

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